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IN THE DRAWINGS:

Replacement sheets have been provided depicting Figures 1-3 to formalize these drawings as requested by the Examiner. No new matter has been entered by these replacement sheets.

REMARKS

This request for reconsideration is being filed in response to the Office Action dated March 22, 2005. For the following reasons, this application should be considered in condition for allowance and the case passed to issue.

New replacement sheets have been provided with this amendment. These replacement sheets formalize the drawings submitted with the application, as requested by the Examiner.

Indication of allowability of claims 13 and 19 if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims is gratefully acknowledged. However, in light of the remarks provided below, these claims have not been rewritten into independent form at this time.

Claims 9-12, 14-15, 16-18 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the background of invention (BOI) in view of Adkisson, et al. (hereafter "Adkisson"). This rejection is hereby traversed and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof are respectfully requested. The following is a comparison of the present invention with BOI and Adkisson references.

The present invention, as recited in claim 9, for example, describes a semiconductor device comprising a main die area containing functional circuitry, and a scribe line monitor area circumferentially surrounding the main die area. Stress relief elements are provided in the scribe line monitor area. Neither the BOI nor the Adkisson reference describes or makes obvious such a combination of features.

As conceded in the Office Action, the BOI does not teach stress relief elements in the scribe line monitor area. For teaching such stress relief elements in the scribe line monitor area, the Examiner relies on Adkisson. However, it is respectfully submitted that reliance upon Adkisson for this teaching is misplaced.

Adkisson, U.S. Patent No. 6,653,710, relates to a fuse structure with thermal and crack-stop protection. In asserting that Adkisson teaches stress relief element in a scribe line monitor area, the Examiner points out Figures 1-5, and Column 4, lines 48-64 and Column 6, lines 1-7 as teaching the stress relief element in the scribe line monitor area. Applicant respectfully submits that the portions of the text cited by the Examiner do not support a position that the stress relief elements described by Adkisson are in the scribe line monitor area. In fact, Adkisson does not describe at all or mention a scribe line monitor area, nor especially in the cited portions of the specification.

Furthermore, Adkisson fails to disclose the use of dummy vias to provide crack resistance. The structures 22 and 26 are described as merged connections 22 in the form of local interconnects and/or vias, while 26 is shown as a contact that provides a thermal path. None of these contacts or structures is depicted or described as a dummy via.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Adkisson fails to provide any of the deficiencies noted with respect to BOI. Therefore, the rejection of claims under 35 USC §103 based on obviousness should be reconsidered and withdrawn and such action is courteously solicited.

In light of the amendments and remarks above, this application should be considered in condition for allowance and the case passed to issue. If there are any questions regarding this request for reconsideration or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated to expedite the prosecution of the application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including

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extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 502624 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

McDERMOTT WILL & EMERY LLP



John A. Hankins
Registration No. 32,029

4370 La Jolla Village Drive, Suite 700
San Diego, CA 92122
Phone: 858.535.9001 JAH:gss
Facsimile: 858.597.1585
Date: July 22, 2005

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as our correspondence address.**